

VZCZCXRO3474

PP RUEHCD RUEHGA RUEHGD RUEHHA RUEHHC RUEHMC RUEHQU RUEHTM RUEHVC
DE RUEHBU #1977/01 2441737
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 011737Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5745
INFO RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNMRC/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 1708

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 001977

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA TOM SHANNON, JOHN MAISTO, AND CHARLES SHAPIRO
NSC FOR DAN FISK
TREASURY FOR DAS NANCY LEE
USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/01/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [AR](#)

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: RALLY CALLING FOR GREATER PUBLIC
SECURITY CHALLENGES PRESIDENT KIRCHNER

Classified By: CDA, a.i., Michael Matera, Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Anti-crime advocate Carlos Blumberg filled the symbolically important Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires last night in a peaceful demonstration calling on the Kirchner government to provide increased public security. Event organizers succeeded in attracting a large crowd, despite efforts by President Kirchner's allies to upstage the event or scare away participants. Blumberg called for the creation of a unified national police force, reform of the penal code, and a stronger counternarcotics campaign. Blumberg took pains to avoid the appearance of a campaign rally in an effort to counter the accusations of Kirchner supporters that the event was really an anti-Kirchner campaign assembly. The counter-march organized by piquetero leader and close Kirchner ally Luis D'Elia 500 meters away from the Plaza de Mayo failed to attract more than a few thousand participants.

D'Elia, accompanied by other Kirchner allies like Carlos Kunkel and piquetero leader Emilio Persico, referred to the participants in Blumberg's rally as "fascists" tied to the former military dictatorship and accused Blumberg of "using the cadaver of his son as a stepping stone to rise in his political career." END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Anti-crime advocate Carlos Blumberg managed to fill the symbolically important Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires for a rally last night calling for increased public security, despite efforts by President Nestor Kirchner's allies to upstage the event or scare away participants. Organizers placed the attendance at 180,000 to 300,000 people, while informal government sources quoted in pro-government media claimed a much lower figure. The police did not issue a formal crowd estimate. (Comment: The Blumberg rally appeared to fill the same amount of space as Kirchner's "Plaza de Si" on May 25, which is significant because most of the participants in Kirchner's May rally were bused in and paid by government organizers, while Blumberg's rally was composed of ordinary citizens who arrived by their own means. End Comment.)

13. (SBU) In his speech, Blumberg appealed to the GOA for increased security measures and took pains to avoid the appearance of an anti-Kirchner campaign rally, while acknowledging the GOA actions to prevent the march. Blumberg

called for the creation of a unified national police force, reform of the penal code, and a stronger counternarcotics campaign. Although major opposition leaders, such as Republican Proposal's (PRO) Mauricio Macri and Ricardo Lopez Murphy attended the rally, they did not speak or appear on stage. Blumberg asked that respect be paid to Argentina's elected officials when the crowd began to boo after President Kirchner and Buenos Aires Governor Felipe Sola's names were mentioned. Organizers requested that no political signs be displayed, and even discouraged the carrying of Argentine flags. (Note: Organizers for the May 25 Kirchner rally distributed Argentine flags to the crowd and made the national flag a central theme of the May 25 event. End Note.) Blumberg referenced the efforts by Kirchner allies to prevent last night's gathering, such as cutting off Blumberg's phone service and trying to create a climate of fear by holding a nearby counter-rally an hour ahead of time that also made it more difficult for people to enter the Plaza de Mayo to attend Blumberg's event. After the rally, Kirchner and his top officials refused to receive Blumberg's written statement that he tried to personally deliver at the Casa Rosada, and Blumberg was directed to Vice President Daniel Scioli.

14. (SBU) The counter-march organized by piquetero leader and close Kirchner ally Luis D'Elia 500 meters away from the Plaza de Mayo failed to attract more than a few thousand participants. Crowd estimates placed the attendance at 3000-5000. The nominal head of the rally, Nobel Prize winner Perez Esquivel refused to take part in the event, accusing D'Elia of hijacking the program. D'Elia, accompanied by other Kirchner allies like Carlos Kunkel and piquetero leader Emilio Persico, referred to the participants in Blumberg's

BUENOS AIR 00001977 002 OF 002

rally as "fascists" tied to the former military dictatorship.

D'Elia accused Blumberg of "using the cadaver of his son as a stepping stone to rise in his political career." (Note: Carlos Blumberg lost his only son Axel in a botched kidnapping in 2004, which led the engineer to dedicate the last two years as an anti-crime advocate. End Note.)

15. (C) COMMENT: Blumberg's rally is significant because this is the first time since assuming the presidency that Kirchner has been challenged in the politically significant Plaza de Mayo right outside the front door of the Casa Rosada. Leading political commentators conclude that the rally represented a defeat for the Kirchner government, both in terms of their efforts to prevent a sizable turnout and to promote a successful counter-rally. The idea of organizing a counter-rally against a citizens' march for greater public security was a tough sell for Kirchner's allies, and their efforts to keep people away from Blumberg's event by creating a climate of fear of violence and by reducing access to the Plaza de Mayo failed. Blumberg says that he is not seeking any political office. However, the success of last night's rally will only increase the center-right opposition's courting of Blumberg as a possible candidate for Governor of Buenos Aires in the 2007 elections. END COMMENT.

MATERA